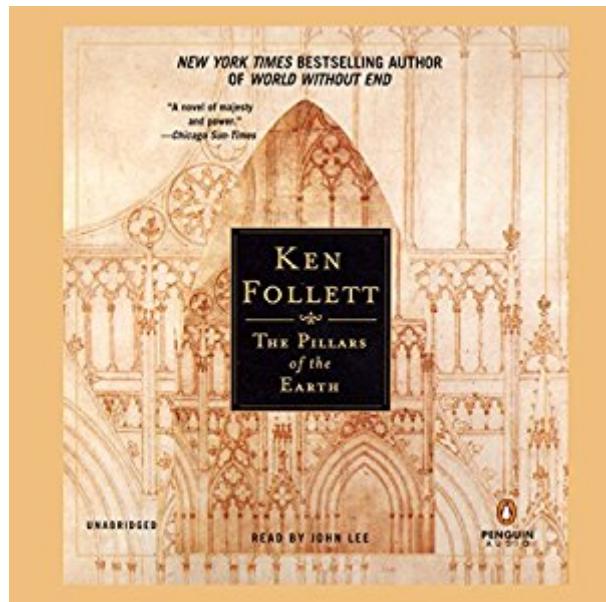


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# The Pillars Of The Earth



## **Synopsis**

The Pillars of the Earth sweeps through four decades of 12th Century England drawing the listener into the raw, flamboyant middle ages. It is a shining saga of good and evil, treachery and intrigue, violence and beauty. Not-so-noble knights, righteous heroes, valiant heroines and both virtuous and immoral men of God highlight this story. They manipulate, and are in turn manipulated by, the political turmoil and unrest between the reigns of Henry I and Henry II. The listener will cheer on the fates of the virtuous and hiss at the evil-doers. A truly fascinating story that the listener will never forget. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## **Book Information**

Audible Audio Edition

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## **Customer Reviews**

I've never been a fan of Follett, and picked this book up with some misgivings - anyone these days can try to do an "historical" novel with some quick sex, some fake archaic new-speak, and a TV-movie-miniseries concept of history. While there are some minor flaws in this book, its sweep, characterization, tensions, and love of its subject are simply riveting. I could not put the darned thing down and have lost sleep for a week compulsively page-turning. Follett, unbelievably, seems to have made little splash with this book when it first came out - more shame to the critics who missed a "Gone With the Wind" from a conventional thriller author. His primary strength in the book is his magnificent characters. By the end, Prior Phillip, Alien, Jack, Richard, "Witch" Ellen, William of Hamleigh, Waleran Bigod, and a host of supporting characters are as real as people you know. Their strengths and weaknesses feel as sound as earth. I've just reached the part where the Cathedral is finished, and its magnificent image, built in love, hardship, and devotion, colors the

whole book like light through stained glass. And I suspect the ending will be as immensely "right" as the entire rest of the book in its proportion in spinning out complicated human lives and emotions. Follett manages to write of an age of religious devotion without tumbling into the two pits - making fun of medieval Christian faith, or uncritically adopting it. An IMMENSELY satisfying read. I could quibble with what I feel is some gratuitous sex, some slightly contrived plot twists, but that's like complaining about some flotsam in the river as you're going over Niagara. DO NOT MISS THIS BOOK if you love wonderful story-spinning and history. Well done, Mr. Follett!

I actually listened to this book on tape, while my wife read the paperback. Both of us loved it. I not only recommend the book, but also urge people to rent the Book on Tape version, narrated by David Case, whose acting and narrative talents shine through, bringing the various characters to life. (But still purchase the book from !) I came to Pillars of the Earth after spending about two solid years reading, in my spare time, nothing but medieval histories, with a focus on fourteenth century England and the Plantagenet kings. I had never before read a book by Follett, who I had assumed mass-produced pulp spy fiction. I only chose the book because of my interest in medieval history. To my delight and surprise, I discovered the book to be a true work of literature, which might well still be read in 100 years. I found myself amazed by Follett's ability to create an extremely complex and compelling plot, with compelling characters, against a backdrop that seemed true to the histories I had been reading. The early twelfth century is a period neglected by us moderns; but it's one that's inherently interesting. Who, today, has even heard of King Stephen (who preceded the famous Henry II, immortalized twice by Peter O'Toole in the 1960s movies Beckett and Lion in Winter)? Because, in England at least, Stephen's reign was a time of virtual anarchy, Follett was able to use the period to create characters who demonstrate the brutal lengths to which people can go when unconstrained by law and an effective legal order. At the same time, though, he has created religious and other well-meaning characters who, if alien to us because of their belief in Hell and a God intervening almost minute-by-minute in human affairs, display courage and the best of intentions in the harsh face of barbarism. This juxtaposition of the brutal and the well-meaning makes for an interesting meditation on human nature and on the hope for the gradual further civilization of our species. His ultimate message is encouraging, though he certainly doesn't shrink from depicting the nastiness of which humans are capable. In short, the book is a marvelous piece of fiction, in which Follett has done an excellent job capturing the feeling of a distant and neglected period of history.

Personally, I don't place a lot of stock in Oprah's book club lottery. The instant stardom that placement on this reading list bestows authors isn't always, in my opinion, justified. That being said, this is a wonderful book. *Pillars* is complex, moving and informative. The research was excellent, the characters are engaging and the story moves at a surprisingly quick pace for a novel of this length. The descriptions of the scenes, the completeness of the political interplay and the twists of the plot make this one of my favorite books of all time. Normally, I have little patience for historical fiction unless it brings something new or truly engaging to the table. *Pillars* certainly does that and more. In other words, while there is no such thing as the perfect book, this one comes very close. My advice is simple...READ THIS BOOK -- YOU'LL LOVE IT! But do yourself a small favor, go to the used bookstore or the library, this is not a new release and you can enjoy Follett's favorite work for a fraction of the cost. A quick search of shows dozens of options that don't have the Oprah name or any other bells and whistles that I'm sure are unneeded to enjoy this spectacular piece of fiction

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